

CLAIMS

The invention claimed is:

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1. A method for managing on-lines auctions:
 - creating an auction consolidation account;
 - receiving a plurality of auction requests in association with the account, each to be posted on a respective auction site;
 - visiting each auction site and, during the visit, posting the corresponding auction request;
 - 10 compiling a consolidated auction monitoring report containing information pertaining to each auction request;
 - revisiting each auction site to extract updated auction information pertaining to the corresponding auction request; and
 - updating the auction monitoring report with the updated auction
 - 15 information extracted from the auction monitoring sites.
 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of posting an auction request to an auction site comprise the steps of:
 - receiving auction advertisement text;
 - 20 receiving an auction advertisement image;
 - receiving a selection of one of a plurality of predefined auction templates;
 - creating an auction submission by combining the advertisement text and the advertisement images in a format defined by the selected auction template;
 - and
 - 25 transmitting the auction submission to the auction site.
 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of extracting updated information from an auction site comprises the steps of:
 - identifying a page containing the updated information; and

parsing the page to extract the updated auction information.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the steps of downloading the page before parsing the page to extract the updated auction information.

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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of revisiting the auction sites occurs upon receiving a user request for the auction monitoring report.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of repeating the steps of claim 1 to create a plurality of auction monitoring reports in association with a plurality of accounts.

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7. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of: periodically identifying posted auctions that have closed; and for each closed auction:

visiting the corresponding auction site,
extracting closed auction data from the auction site, and
processing the closed auction data.

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8. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of extracting the closed auction data comprises the steps of identifying a page containing the closed auction data; and parsing the page to extract the auction closing data information.

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9. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of processing the closed auction data comprises the step of sending a notice of the auction closing in a manner specified in a record associated with the corresponding account.

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10. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of processing the closed auction data comprises the steps of:

determining whether the auction resulted in a sale, and if the auction resulted in a sale;

5 notifying a selling party of the sale;

notifying the buying party of the sale; and

creating a sales record documenting the closed auction closing.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of processing the closed auction comprises the steps of:

obtaining an automatic feedback instruction from settings data associated with the corresponding account; and

transmitting auction feedback data to the corresponding site in accordance with the automatic feedback instruction.

12. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of processing the closed auction comprises the steps of:

displaying auction tracking fields in a corresponding auction monitoring report;

20 receiving user input to one or more of the tracking fields; and

recording the user input to the auction monitoring report.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the tracking fields include buyer notification, payment received, auction item shipped, and payment received.

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14. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:
obtaining an auction processing instruction from settings data associated
with the corresponding account;
performing an operation in accordance with the auction processing
5 instruction; and
setting one of the tracking field to indicate completion of the operation.

15. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable
instructions for performing the steps of claim 1.

16. A computer-controlled apparatus configured to perform the method
of claim 1.

17. An auction management system configured to:
receive and store an inventory of text descriptions of auction items;
receive and store an inventory of images of the auction items;
receive and store an inventory of advertisement templates;
for each of a plurality of auction requests, combine a selected text
description and a selected image to create an auction submission in a format
20 defined by a selected auction template;
visit each auction site to post a corresponding auction submission;
compile a consolidated auction monitoring report containing information
pertaining to each auction submission;
revisit each auction site to extract updated auction information pertaining
25 to the corresponding auction request; and
updating the auction monitoring report with the updated auction
information extracted from the auction monitoring sites.

18. The auction management system of claim 17, further configured to:
periodically identify posted auctions that have closed; and
for each closed auction:

visit the corresponding auction site,
extract auction closing data from the auction site, and
process the closed auction.

19. The auction management system of claim 17, further configured to:
determine whether the auction resulted in a sale, and if the auction resulted
in a sale:

notify a selling party of the sale;
notify the buying party of the sale; and
create a sales record documenting the auction closing data.

20. The auction management system of claim 17, further configured to:
obtain an automatic feedback instruction from settings data associated with
the corresponding account; and
transmit auction feedback data to the corresponding site in accordance
with the automatic feedback instruction.

21. The auction management system of claim 17, further configured to:
display auction tracking fields in a corresponding auction monitoring
report;
receive user input to one or more of the tracking fields; and
record the user input to the auction monitoring report.

22. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of:

creating an auction consolidation account;

receiving a plurality of auction requests in association with the account,

5 each to be posted on a respective auction site;

visiting each auction site and, during the visit, posting the corresponding auction request by:

receiving auction advertisement text,

receiving auction advertisement images,

10 receiving a selection of one of a plurality of predefined auction templates,

creating an auction submission by combining the advertisement text and the advertisement images in a format defined by the selected auction template, and

15 transmitting the auction submission to the auction site;

compiling a consolidated auction monitoring report containing information pertaining to each auction request;

revisiting each auction site and, during the subsequent visit, extracting updated auction information pertaining to the corresponding auction request by:

20 identifying a page containing the updated information, and

parsing the page to extract the updated auction information;

updating the auction monitoring report with the updated auction information extracted from the auction monitoring sites;

25 upon identification of the account, providing access to the monitoring report;

periodically identifying posted auctions that have closed; and

for each closed auction:

visiting the corresponding auction site,

extracting auction closing data from the auction site, and

processing the closed auction by determining whether the auction resulted in a sale, and if the auction resulted in a sale, notifying a selling party of the sale, notifying the buying party of the sale, and creating a sales record documenting the auction closing data.

5 23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the instructions further comprise the steps of repeating the steps of claim 1 to create a plurality of auction monitoring reports in association with a plurality of accounts.

10 24. The method of claim 23, wherein the instructions further comprise the step of processing the closed auction comprises the steps of:

obtaining an automatic feedback instruction from settings data associated with the corresponding account; and

15 transmitting auction feedback data to the corresponding site in accordance with the automatic feedback instruction.

20 25. The method of claim 24, wherein the instructions further comprise the step of processing the closed auction comprises the steps of:

displaying auction tracking fields in a corresponding auction monitoring report;

receiving user input to one or more of the tracking fields;

recording the user input to the auction monitoring report.

25 26. The method of claim 25, wherein the instructions further comprise the steps of:

obtaining an auction processing instruction from settings data associated with the corresponding account;

30 performing an operation in accordance with the auction processing instruction; and

setting one of the tracking field to indicate completion of the operation.